

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 17, with the following amended paragraph:

Furthermore, it has been shown that it is this slow permeation (diffusion) of atmospheric oxygen that contributes to “barrel softening or maturation”. Moutounet et. al. (referenced above) showed that a typical new oak barrique allows O₂ permeation through its walls, in the range of 20-30mg/l.yr. Kelly and Wollan report an estimated “highest diffusion” (ie. permeation) rate” into a typical barrique as 2.2ml O₂/litre wine/month or 26.4 ml/l/yr (34.6mg/l./gr) in their paper “Microoxygenation of Wine in Barrels”, Wine Network Technology, www.winenet.com.au, incorporating International Patent Application PCT/AU02/01250 (both herein incorporated by reference). As used hereinafter in the application and claims, the phrase “oak cask maturation” is defined as maturation that takes place in oak casks at the levels of oxygen permeation normally associated with maturation in oak casks.